

1                    APPARATUS FOR SHARP IMPLEMENT TRANSFER,  
2                    COUNTING AND TEMPORARY DISPOSAL OR STORAGE

3                    This application is a continuation-in-part of  
4                    application Serial No. 09/847,969, filed May 2, 2001, *now abandoned,*  
5                    which application claims the priority of U.S. Provisional  
6                    Application No. 60/203,363, filed May 10, 2000.

7                    DESCRIPTION

8                    TECHNICAL FIELD

9                    The invention relates to an improved design for a  
10                    container which is a health care safety product designed  
11                    to help protect against accidental injury during the  
12                    passage of sharp instruments; i.e., suture needles and  
13                    scalpels within the performance of any surgical  
14                    procedure. It does not involve direct patient contact.

15                    BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

16                    There are approximately 500,000 to 800,000 needle  
17                    stick injuries reported each year regarding healthcare  
18                    professionals in the United States. Other than in the  
19                    patient's room, these accidents occur most often in the  
20                    operating room. As a result of this significant health  
21                    hazard, health device manufacturers have developed  
22                    various products designed to protect healthcare  
23                    professionals. These items include retractable syringes,  
24                    "sharps" containers, syringe covers, syringe guards, etc.  
25                    While needle sticks associated with syringes account for  
26                    an  
27                    estimated 75% of the problem, it is estimated that most  
28                    of the remaining 25% are the result of sticks associated  
29                    with suturing during surgical procedures or during the  
30                    unprotected passing of these sharps. It is this niche  
31                    which has not been adequately addressed by suture  
32                    manufacturers who have left it up to the discretion of  
33                    the end user to provide their own protection.